Almost a quarter million evacuees have traveled to Texas. Seventeen thousand of which have come to Dallas. This is an extremely traumatic situation. Many of these individuals are looking for missing family and friends. Most do not know if or when they will be able to return home.

The one bright spot is the thousands of Americans who have opened their hearts to volunteer time and money. I truly believe it is the personal efforts that make the greatest impact.

During this time of tragedy many heroes have emerged. Local residents, churches, and businesses in Dallas have overwhelmingly offered assistance.

The efforts of those who are volunteering their time at Dallas area shelters have made an immeasurable impact. In addition, many Texans have offered jobs or opened their homes to evacuated families.

I know that the generous spirit of Texans and of all Americans will help to aid this transition. When these dislocated people return to their communities, immediate economic opportunities should be given to them first so they can rebuild.

Mr. Speaker, we now look towards this Administration to exhibit the same type of sacrifice and humanity that countless Americans and charities have displayed.

I question those policies that stretched those National Guard units that could have rendered more immediate aid in New Orleans and elsewhere. First responders have not been given the tools they need. And this Administration drastically underfunded the Army Corps of Engineers, who are responsible for maintaining the levees surrounding New Orleans.

It is time to acknowledge our dependence on fossil fuels—whether foreign or domestic—which set the stage for further economic displacement ahead

It is neither premature nor unpatriotic to raise questions as the federal government recovers its footing after an initially dismal performance. The point is that even though the government is now showing signs of progress, much work remains.

I can assure the Administration we, as Members of CSC, will do our best to work with them towards fulfilling our commitment to the American citizens.

I will be offering a comprehensive education appropriations bill along with Congressman HINOJOSA. There are currently 160,000 displaced students as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The Texas Education Agency predicts that as many as 70,000 displaced students will enter Texas schools this year.

This bill sets up a \$500 million fund for displaced students within the Department of Education. From this fund, states will receive \$3,000 for each displaced student that enters their school systems. This money will provide funding for additional classrooms, teachers, books, and supplies. These young people have been through a traumatic experience and providing a safe stable school environment is vital

I will also introduce a bill that would call on the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that the displaced survivors of Hurricane Katrina and first responders receive the mental health services they need.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, think of the incredible stress these people are experiencing.

There is anxiety. There is depression. There is a sense of hopelessness.

I am a former nurse, and I worked in the mental health sector. I feel strongly that these displaced individuals, many of whom are left with nothing, desperately need mental health services to address the trauma they have endured.

This bill will call upon Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice to address those needs. Mental health should not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Emergency response to this calamity was disappointing. When I visited my District in Dallas and saw the suffering of many displaced individuals, I was struck at how far-reaching and long-term these issues will be. Let us make good legislative decisions to help them in the best way possible.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim my time to address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

COMING TOGETHER FOR THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-woman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I hope that as my colleagues have spoken now for almost an hour, the American people will understand the depth of passion and concern that we are now experiencing as Members of the United States Congress.

In particular, I want to acknowledge the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. Jefferson) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. Thompson) for the devastation that they have experienced in their districts and simply suggest that this is not a question of "I's" and "me's," but it is a time now for "me's" and, if you will, "us's," a time for America to come together, and a time for us to stand steadfast and to be able to be the wind beneath the wings of those survivors.

I will also say, Mr. Speaker, that it is not a time to shy away from the critical questions that need to be asked and answered.

There are many people now today that had homes and had a sense of comfort and might now be sitting with their family around a television set, just finishing dinner, going out, coming back in. But, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, they had a home. And unfortunately tonight, as we stand in this wonderful testament to democracy, we have Americans who have experienced a brutal and unending disaster in their lives.

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And so I come today most of all to offer my deepest sympathy for the ones who lost their lives, and my deepest expression of concern to the survivors. And they are survivors. For those of us who watched in utter shock the events of the last week, what an opportunity to come face to face in my own city of Houston with the survivors. What an opportunity to be able to see the greatest expression of charitable output, if you will, by the city of Houston and Harris County, as people worked day in and day out, first working with no road map, no structure on how to receive hundreds and hundreds of buses and thousands of people, almost 1.700 in one night, coming, individuals with the same clothing that they had on, suffering from overexposure, water, fear, trauma, individuals who had come from the Superdome and ultimately the Convention Center who thought they had been abandoned with no food, no water and no clothing and disaster amongst them.

These individuals survived, and they came with a resilient spirit, and they buoyed the volunteers, and they buoved the leadership of our city and Harris County. They worked to improve the conditions of the Dome, albeit as I walked and saw the throngs of people and sometimes the despair in senior citizens begging to go home, as they sat by the wheelchair of an elderly person, sitting with no clothing, people looking for their loved ones, holding up signs, where is my daughter, where is my son, my grandmother, my mother, my husband, my wife; doctors coming in in throngs from the medical center and all around the community; clothing being brought time after time. It was an amazing outpouring, but yet there was despair.

But still, the volunteers in Houston kept meeting and meeting and meeting, recognizing that they could not give up as well. And now the George R. Brown Convention Center, opening its doors with people and wonderful sites for the children and libraries and the medical MASH unit.

And we have gotten better, Mr. Speaker. We know how to do it now. And these are, in fact, our brothers and sisters. And, yes, there is something to the story of the Good Samaritan. We are, in fact, not doers of the deed, but we do it; and we understand what it means.

But at the same time we rejoice that there are survivors, we must recognize that there must be an inquiry. And as we speak, I am writing legislation entitled the Katrina Inquiry Commission, because we remember the 9/11 Commission, and we are grateful for it.

I am also associated with writing legislation that will drop tomorrow that provides relief for the survivors, so that if they are in bankruptcy, none of the benefits from the Federal Government can be used to discharge debts.

We are also looking to provide more technology and working with FEMA